

Weston Town Committee for the Oversight of the Lachat Property

MINUTES

March 31, 2014

Present: Committee Members: Ellen McCormick (chair), Carol Baldwin, Paul Deysenroth, Nicholas Bell, Judy Saffan, Michelle Fracasso, Amy Kalafa (Guests: Margaret Wirtenberg, Robert Hatch, architect, Denis Tracey, Selectman)

Presided By: Ellen McCormick

Meeting was called to order at 7:45

A. *Selectman Dennis Tracey attended the meeting and discussed the following with the Committee:*

1. **Conservation Committee:** *Dennis confirmed that the Conservation Committee approved the plan for the Community Garden, Access, and Bridges as proposed by the LOC. Their concern was the farming portion as it might affect the wetlands. Members of the LOC are preparing a Farm Management Plan that would address these concerns. As part of that process, they are meeting with the Fairfield County Soil Conservation Service.*
2. **Governance:** The Selectmen plan to have the Lachat Town Farm remain under Town control. A new Town-appointed Lachat Commission would be responsible for the oversight. The suggested number of members is 9. An Advisory Committee would also be formed to lend their expertise to the Commission which could include a lawyer, local farmers, representatives from Kiwanis, Historical Society, the schools, Youth Services, Boy/Girl Scouts, Arts Commission, etc. A mission statement would be written.

Dennis recommends that a paid farm manager be brought on right from the beginning of the community farm start. Michelle will talk to town administrator Tom Landry about posting a job opening.

The Town Farm would create an annual budget, would be part of the Town Budget but would be revenue neutral. The Town will assign a Town staff member to oversee the finances. Programs could be run out of the Town's Youth Services office and/or Parks and Rec.

Friends of Lachat would remain a fund-raising organization for the Farm.

- B. **Farm House Restoration:** Architect Robert Hatch discussed next steps for the farmhouse. Dennis Tracey will look into what might be required from Planning & Zoning. In the meantime, foundation repairs are ongoing.
- C. **Volunteer participation:** Kiwanians participated in a successful workday at Lachat. Future collaborative projects with Kiwanis were discussed. Also XL Insurance is planning on a corporate volunteer workday. Discussions are on going with GVI and Building Without Borders.

- D. Community Garden:** A proposed Community Garden Build weekend is scheduled for May 3-4. The hope is that many community groups will participate. Issues still being worked out are source of wood, a final plan, source of soil, irrigation, path bedding, plowing or burning before hand, rock removal, fencing and rodent control, etc.
- E. Oil Tank Removal:** Information going to Tom Landry for his opinion.
- F. Tractor:** A used tractor is available; funding sources to pay for it are being explored.
- G. Fundraising:** Carol said the end of year matching grant was paid. Amy is seeking a Farm to School Planning Grant. The Weston School District would be the applicant.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING WILL BE HELD in Town Hall in two weeks – date to be determined.

(Minutes submitted by Carol Baldwin.)